

Amendments to the Claims

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of modifying an antibiotic-producing strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor* to increase antibiotic production in said strain, the method comprising functionally deleting in said strain the *scbA* gene by introducing a deletion, stop codon or frameshift into the coding sequence of said gene, wherein before said introduction said *scbA* gene encodes a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 17.

Claims 2-8 (Cancelled)

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A modified strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor*, the modified strain having a functional deletion of the *scbA* gene, said functional deletion being effected by introducing a deletion, stop codon or frameshift into the coding sequence of said gene, whereby production of at least one antibiotic in said modified strain is increased compared to a wild-type strain of *Streptomyces coelicolor*, wherein before said introduction said *scbA* gene encodes a polypeptide having the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 17.

Claim 10 (Cancelled)

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the strain is *S. coelicolor* A3(2).

Claim 12 (Cancelled)

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The strain of claim 9, which is a modified strain of *S. coelicolor* A3(2).

Claim 14 (Cancelled)

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A method for identifying *Streptomyces* species in which antibiotic production is increased by the functional deletion of the *scbA* gene of *S. coelicolor* or a homolog thereof, said *scbA* gene ~~or said homolog~~ having a nucleotide sequence which:

(a) is the complement of nucleotides 2142-1199 of SEQ ID NO: 19; and/or

(b) encodes a polypeptide having ~~at least 35% sequence identity with~~ the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 17; ~~and/or~~ and said homologue having a nucleotide sequence which:

© (c) is the complement of nucleotides 2142-1199 of SEQ ID NO: 19; and/or ~~capable of specific hybridization with the amplification product obtained using the primers:~~

~~oligo1 (5' GACCACGT(CG)CC(CG)GGCATG; SEQ ID NO: 1)~~
and

~~oligo2 (5' GTCCTG(CG)TGGCC(CG)GT(CG)AC(CG)CG(CG)AC; SEQ ID NO: 2)~~

~~which produce said amplification product from total DNA of said species or strain,~~

(d) encodes a polypeptide having at least 35% sequence identity with SEQ ID NO: 17;

the method comprising functionally deleting the *scbA* gene of *S. coelicolor* or said homolog thereof in an antibiotic-producing strain of a *Streptomyces* species by introducing a deletion, stop codon or frameshift into the coding sequence of said gene, the effect of said deletion on increasing said antibiotic production in said antibiotic-producing strain being unknown, said species being other than *S. virginiae* and *S. griseus*, culturing said strain under conditions suitable for the production of antibiotic, and determining whether antibiotic production in said strain is increased.

Claims 16-19 (Cancelled)

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 15 ~~19~~,

wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a polypeptide having at least 50% sequence identity with the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:17.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 20, wherein said sequence identity is at least 65%.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 21, wherein-said sequence identity is at least 80%.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 22, wherein said sequence identity is at least 95%.

Claims 24-32 (Cancelled)